



Ambassador John Berry – World Health Day

**Ambassador Berry's Remarks for
The World Health Day Tea
Chief of Mission Residence**

As prepared for delivery, April 7, 2014

I am pleased to welcome all of you to our home to celebrate World Health Day. Professor Jane Halton, Secretary of the Department of Health, was able to join us today.

I'd like to offer a special welcome to the students from Forrest Primary School. They are responsible for the beautiful cow you saw outside.

Global health is a central theme of President Obama's development agenda, which calls for new and innovative approaches to challenges such as food security, combating disease, and working towards an AIDS-free generation.

U.S. engagement in health bolsters stability and growth around the world, helps improve quality of life, and creates opportunities for stronger alliances and better economic relations. For example, through the President's Malaria Initiative, we are working to cut malaria deaths by half in 19 countries in sub-Saharan Africa and in six countries in Asia. PEPFAR is bringing lifesaving anti-HIV treatments to nearly 7 million people around the world. Through the Global Fund, public and private organizations are fighting to eradicate AIDS, TB, and malaria. And, we are making investments that reduce gender-based inequalities in access to health care and improve outcomes for women and girls.

While we cooperate with many different countries to improve the health of people around the world, Australia is a key partner in this effort. We cooperate with Australians in fields as diverse as medical and technological innovation to improving health and fitness.

Health and innovation are among my major policy priorities as well. I think there are three areas where we can enhance our cooperation over the course of the next year.

First, there is a lot more we can be doing to research diseases and injuries affecting the human brain. That's why President Obama announced the launch of the BRAIN Initiative last year. He hopes that, much like the Decade of the Brain did in the 1990s, the BRAIN Initiative will lead to dramatic advances in our understanding of how the brain works. In turn, we hope that this will lead to cures for diseases such as Parkinson's and Alzheimer's and help us repair the damage caused by traumatic brain injuries.

Australians are already doing amazing brain research in Brisbane, Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney. Just as the human genome project depended on the cooperation of researchers around the world, so will mapping the brain. We're looking forward to seeing how we can work even more effectively with Australian scientists.



Ambassador John Berry – World Health Day

Second, we are seeking to strengthen our partnerships on the Global Health Security Agenda. Global Health Security is more than just a matter of having healthier populations. It is also about increasing the stability of society and keeping the world safe from biological threats. And it is about researching the impacts of climate change on human health, like Professor Tony McMichael is doing.

Australia is a key partner in our efforts to accelerate progress toward a world safe from infectious disease and to promote global health security as an international priority. For example, Australian Clare Smith is working with researchers at the University of Massachusetts to develop a cure for malaria. Katherine Thurber, an American Fulbright Scholar working on her doctorate at ANU, is looking for ways to improve health outcomes for indigenous people here in Australia.

The United States will be coordinating our activities with international partners throughout 2014. We know that, working together, we can make significant progress in improving global health.

Finally, Australia is hosting the International AIDS Conference in Melbourne in July. It'll be a great opportunity for our experts to meet together and find ways to better advance U.S.-Australia cooperation in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

I've been impressed, during my time in Australia, by what we are doing together to look at problems in new ways. Matt McCrary (Mc CRAW- ry), another of our Fulbright Scholars, is working with Dr. Bronwyn Ackermann at the University of Sydney to prevent injury – and improve performance – in concert musicians by adapting techniques from sports medicine.

And some very resourceful people are developing new ways to ensure that medical care reaches even the most remote parts of this great country. From The Purple Truck that offers dialysis in far flung communities to the Royal Flying Doctor Service to the NPY Women's Council, I am inspired by Australians' innovation and creativity.

This is the kind of innovation that we will need to tackle the looming health problems of the world today. And it is the kind of creativity that gives me hope for the future. Working together, there is no problem too big for us to solve. We hope you'll continue conversations about health with us after today.